

FOOTBALL KICKING TRAINING AID

Background of the Invention

[0001] This invention relates to a training aid and, more particularly, to a modified football and thimble or glove combination which assists in teaching a player to correctly support a football while another player kicks the football.

[0002] The effective supporting of a football, placed on the ground or a tee while it is kicked, is not always readily learned, particularly in the case of a young or novice football player. The younger or novice player is more likely to withdraw support of the football or to flinch, causing the football to fall or move from its preferable position, as the other player approaches the football. This type of ball movement results in incorrect football supporting techniques that must later be corrected. Thus, the correct placement of the supporter's fingerpad (the palm side of the fingertip) atop the football is an important aspect in correctly supporting a football for kicking by another player and maintaining that correct support. Accordingly, it is desirable to present a training aid which urges an initial, correct interaction between the supporter's fingerpad and the football which enhances the development of a proper supporting action, and the continuation of that support throughout the kicking action.

[0003] Known prior art devices have not addressed the above problems. Various patents disclose devices and complex apparatus designed to hold footballs in proper orientation for kicking. Such devices and apparatus are aimed at training of the kicker, not of the player supporting the football while it is kicked. (U. S. Pat. No. 4,949,973; U. S. Pat. No. 5,435,572; U. S. Pat. No. 4,807,880; U. S. Pat. No. 4,477,077; U. S. Pat. No. 4,632,395; U. S. Pat. No. 4,033,581; U. S. Pat. No. 5,553,855; U. S. Pat. No. 5,488,780; U. S. Pat. No. 4,711,043; U. S. Pat. No. 5,280,922).

Brief Summary of the Invention

[0004] In response to the needs described I have invented a training aid in the form of a modified football and a modified thimble or glove. The modified football has attached at one or both pointed ends a patch or patches having

thereon one element of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM. A flexible thimble or glove has the complementary mating elements of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM only at one fingerpad area thereof. The use of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM in a patch or patches only on the pointed end or ends of the football forces the thimbed or gloved user to properly support the football only at such patch. The patch or patches of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM do not interfere with the normal game play by ungloved players.

10 [0005] It is therefore a general object of this invention to provide a training aid in the form of a modified football and modified thimble or glove combination which assists in proper support of a football during a place kick action.

[0006] A further object of this invention is to provide a training aid, as aforesaid, which does not interfere with normal game play by ungloved players.

15 [0007] Still another object of this invention is to provide a training aid, as aforesaid, which improves the user's support and control of the football while it is being supported for kicking.

[0008] Other objects and advantages of this invention will become apparent from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein is set forth by way of illustration and example, an embodiment of this invention.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0009] FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing a user supporting a modified football with one index finger in a modified flexible thimble;

25 [0010] FIG. 2 is a perspective view showing a user supporting a modified football with one index finger in a modified flexible glove.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment

[0011] Turning more particularly to the drawings, FIG. 1 shows the football 1 modified by attachment of patches 2 at both pointed ends of said football, having fastener elements of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM thereof preferably of the loop-type design, the loop type

elements being less susceptible to damage or sticking to clothing or other items during game play. FIG. 1 also shows the football 1 resting on the ground 3 and being supported by the fingerpad of a user's index finger 4 in a modified flexible thimble 5, having an attachment of a pad 6 having fastener elements of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM complementary to the fastener elements of the patches 2. The complementary mating fastener elements of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM of the pad 6 are preferably of the hook type design.

5 [0012] An alternate design of the modified football 1 has one patch of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM, which the user 10 orients at the top of football 1.

[0013] It is also understood that a combination of hook and loop elements may be used such that elements on the patch or patches 2 are of hook type design and elements on the pad 6 are of loop type design.

15 [0014] FIG. 2 shows the football 1 modified by attachment of patch or patches 2 having fastener elements of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM thereof preferably of the loop-type design, the loop type elements being less susceptible to damage or sticking to clothing or other items during game play. FIG. 2 also shows the football 1 resting on the ground 20 3 and being supported by the fingerpad of a user's index finger 7 in a modified flexible glove 8, having an attachment of a pad 9 having fastener elements of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM complementary to the fastener elements of the patch or patches 2. The complementary mating fastener elements of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark 25 VELCRO.RTM of the pad 9 are preferably of the hook type design.

[0015] It is also understood that a combination of hook and loop elements may be used such that elements on the patch or patches 2 are of hook type design and elements on the pad 9 are of loop type design.

[0016] The restriction of the loop elements of the loop and hook product sold 30 under the trademark VELCRO.RTM to the patch or patches 2 of the football 1 is important. No materials of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark

VELCRO.RTM are positioned elsewhere on the football as shown in prior patents (U. S. Pat. No. 5,570,882; U. S. Pat. No. 5,183,263; U. S. Pat. No. 5,195,745). Accordingly, the mating of the elements of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM on the flexible thimble 5 or 5 flexible glove 8 occurs only when the football 1 is properly supported by a thimbled or gloved user at the patch 2 of football 1. This restriction urges an initial proper FIG. 1 or FIG. 2 support of the football 1 by a thimbled or gloved user only at the patch 2 as the thimbled or gloved user cannot obtain the tactile feedback of attachment if supporting the football elsewhere.

10 [0017] The flexible thimble 5 may be of any resilient material, but the preferred embodiment is that the material be a natural or synthetic rubber. It is important that the pad 6 be found only at a lateral area of the thimble, said area being positioned by the user adjacent to the fingerpad of the user's index finger. The glove 8 may be of any flexible material, it being important that the pad 9 is 15 found only at the lateral area of the index finger adjacent to the fingerpad. This placement of the pad 6 or 9 cooperates with the above-described patch 2 of the football 1 to again assure that the football is properly supported by the fingerpad of the index finger of the user.

[0018] Accordingly, upon supporting the football 1 by the index finger 4, as 20 shown in FIG. 1, the ball 1 is properly supported and not unstable as often found with the younger or novice user. Of course, the degree of interaction between the mating elements of the loop and hook product sold under the trademark VELCRO.RTM on the patch 2 and pad 6 or 9 must be minimal so as to not to interfere with the release of the football 1.